

COCKTAIL BELLES GROUP HISTORY
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As so many AA groups have formed, Cocktail Belles started with a conversation between two alcoholics, Emily A. and Elise Von B., both of whom felt that there was a need for additional AA meetings for women. The women's meeting Smiling Sallies had recently disbanded leaving a gap in women's meetings.

As word spread and the excitement grew about the prospect of a new women's meeting, other AA members (Jen W. & Jenny P.) joined with their ideas and enthusiasm. These women became the steering committee for the development of Belles. Emily A. and Jen W. decided on the name and books to be utilized. The name decided on was to be an amalgam of the "Cocktail" hour, where women, "Belles", could find fellowship and recovery. The name "Belles" came from the 3rd Edition story of the Big Book, "Belle of the Bar". The format of the meeting was to focus on AA literature that was specific to women. It was decided that stories from The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and Experience Strength & Hope and were to be the primary literature base. The meeting format would be to read one to two stories followed by discussion on how it relates to the individuals recovery. Jenny P., who has volunteered for many years at COGF, was a vital support in helping develop the meeting and generously donated much needed supplies.

St. James Episcopal Church, 3400 Calumet St., Columbus, OH 43214 became the site for the Cocktail Belles first group meeting. The inaugural date for Cocktail Belles was Friday March 6, 2020 at 5:30PM. Emily A., who is considered the founder of the meeting, was the chairperson. There were 20 women in attendance. Feedback from members in attendance was positive and with it the hope that the group would continue to grow. Unfortunately, after just three meetings, the global COVID pandemic shutdown occurred which interrupted in-person meetings throughout Columbus. The members adapted by going to an on-line zoom format. Lea D. was instrumental in the development and maintenance of this meeting. When the in-person restrictions were lifted the group returned to St. James where the meeting continues to this day.

The group continues to offer a unique experience regarding women's meetings, by focusing on the specific recovery experiences of women via the women-driven stories. The group conscience, which meets monthly, has expanded the literature base to include selected women's stories from the books Voices of Women in AA and "Our Twelve Traditions" as well as selected women's stories from the Grapevine magazine.

Mia F. became the first secretary and Elise von B. the first treasurer. In August of 2023, the group conscience elected their first GSR, Jen T., who also served as District 28's treasurer (Panel 75). Kelly McE. became the groups first Treatment Facility Representative in May of 2025. Jen T. became the first Archives Committee representative in March of 2025. The number of current active Home Group Members is 8.